



State of Wisconsin
Department of Health and Family Services

Jim Doyle, Governor
Helene Nelson, Secretary

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For Immediate Release
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BADGERCARE GOES ON-LINE

People Can Apply for Health Benefits Using the Internet

MADISON - Department of Health and Family Services Secretary Helene Nelson today formally unveiled ACCESS, a new website that allows Wisconsin residents to apply for benefits online. The new tool was designed partially in anticipation of Governor Doyle's BadgerCare Plus initiative to ensure that all children, regardless of income, have access to affordable health insurance. The application also allows people to apply online for Medicaid, BadgerCare, or the Family Planning Waiver Program and FoodShare.

"ACCESS is a free and convenient way to apply for critical health and nutrition benefits," said Secretary Helene Nelson. "We are pleased to offer this online application process to all Wisconsin residents and especially working parents. One of our goals for BadgerCare Plus is making the program simple-simple for families to understand, simple to enroll in, and simple to administer. ACCESS will help us accomplish this goal by letting families apply for health insurance and other services online."

BadgerCare Plus will combine Family Medicaid, BadgerCare, and Healthy Start into one streamlined, comprehensive program to provide access to affordable health care coverage for all kids in Wisconsin. The initiative also includes strategies to add children and families with incomes above the current ceilings, with a special focus on the working poor. BadgerCare Plus hopes to serve approximately 500,000 individuals once fully implemented.

Wisconsin residents can now use ACCESS to apply online for Medicaid, BadgerCare, or the Family Planning Waiver Program and FoodShare. Wisconsin families may also use ACCESS to:

- Determine which low or no-cost health and nutrition programs they might be eligible for through a short self-assessment tool called Am I Eligible?
- Access up-to-date information about the status of their Medicaid, BadgerCare, Family Planning Waiver Program, FoodShare, SeniorCare, or Caretaker Supplement benefits through a tool called Check My Benefits.

Starting this fall, residents will also be able to report their job changes online. The ACCESS application takes about 30 minutes to complete, sign, and send electronically to the applicant's local county or tribal human service agency. Applicants may need to talk with someone at a local office after they submit the application, but in many cases, this can be done over the telephone. As with all applications for these benefits, applicants will get a decision about their benefits within 30 days.

Since June, more than 4,300 families have applied online through the free, easy-to-use ACCESS website developed by the Department of Health and Family Services. Secretary Nelson made the ACCESS announcement at a BadgerCare Plus Town Hall Meeting held in Ashland, one of her stops on Governor Doyle's Fourth Annual Northern Tour.

To use ACCESS, go to <http://access.wisconsin.gov>.

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